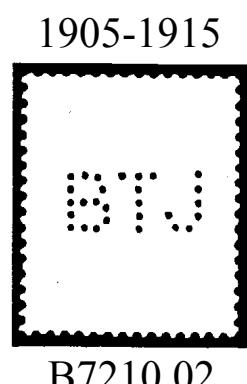
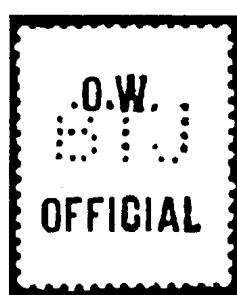
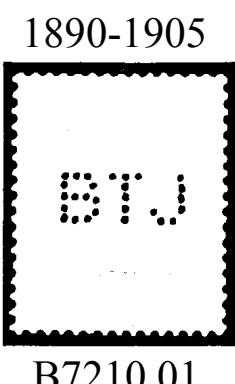


Recently a request came to me for help from Donald Manson of the Kirkcaldy Stamp and Postcard Club. In his stamp collection he has a 2½d King Edward VII definitive overprinted with "O.W./OFFICIAL" which also has the perforated initials "BTJ".

Not knowing much about 'Official' overprints, I could only help out with the perfin. Just two dies are known with these initials and both have been positively identified as having been used by The British Trade Journal, 24 Mark Lane, London EC.



Clearly, Donald's example has the later perfin, which I believe was a single-headed die. Conveniently, the stamp has a postmark date of 5th May 1910, which sits comfortably with what we know for B7210.02.

***But is the overprint genuine?*** There are O.W. detail differences between this example and the illustration shown in Stanley Gibbons. For example, the "W" is closer to the "O", OFFICIAL and the F's have shorter central bars. 1



These 'Official' overprints combined with Perfin are somewhat scarce, but if genuine, how do they come about? My (feeble) guess is that unused overprinted stamps were sent by the 'Office of Works' to the offices of the 'British Trade Journal', intended for use as prepayment for replies or perhaps for postage of copies of the journal. Once in the BTJ's hands they were initialled to deter misuse.

***Has anyone any more plausible suggestions?***